

CIA/RR CB-61-23

CURRENT SUPPORT BRIEF

GENERAL NEED FOR FALLOUT SHELTERS SUGGESTED IN USSR

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND REPORTS
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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GENERAL NEED FOR FALLOUT SHELTERS SUGGESTED IN USSR

During the past five years published information on the possible area and persistency of fallout contamination which could result from the explosion of large nuclear weapons has been gradually expanded until the Soviet public is now being told that lethal fallout may cover large areas, extending in some cases for "hundreds of kilometers" from the point of detonation.

Although it is not evident what action Soviet officials intend to take consistent with the expanded explanation of fallout danger, they have deliberately demonstrated to the population the need for: (1) increased civil defense training in rural areas, (2) shelter preparations in rural areas and small towns near possible target cities, and (3) the development of a fallout warning system to predict fallout patterns and give the notification to take shelter or evacuate threatened areas.

Prior to 1955, no information on fallout was given the general public; material published in the armed forces newspaper Red Star noted only that contamination might extend for "several hundred meters." 1/

A 1956 civil defense manual stated that radioactive contamination is particularly strong in an atomic "ground" explosion--no information was given regarding the size of the area of contamination possible with large nuclear weapons, nor of the possible level and duration of contamination. 2/ In 1957, a documentary film was released for general exhibition in the USSR. Pictures of Hiroshima were used to show the people some of the effects of atomic warfare. "Widespread" radioactive fallout was mentioned, but not defined. 3/*

Additional information about radioactive fallout was published in a 1958 Soviet civil defense manual. It stated that during an atomic ground burst, contamination is possible along the path followed by the radioactive cloud to an area possibly extending for dozens of kilometers. 4/

The extent of contamination was placed at several dozen kilometers from the place of the explosion of an atomic bomb in a 1959 civil defense manual. 5/

Publications in 1960 expanded further on fallout information, indicating that large areas of fallout are possible and stating that the population may have to stay in shelters for several days. One civil defense manual stated, "Persons and animals at a considerable distance (hundreds of kilometers) from such a nuclear blast may be injured...through the fallout of radioactive substances carried by the nuclear cloud...This cloud is carried away from the target area by winds, and the radioactive particles descend toward the earth as the cloud travels...The contaminated area may vary in length from several dozen to several hundreds of kilometers and the width from a few to a few dozen kilometers. The radioactive fallout from nuclear clouds contaminates the air and the area... Therefore, it is essential to arrange for the protection of persons... in the areas which will be affected by the radioactive fallout... Basic protective measures in such areas must include sheltering the people where they are."

* Analyst's underlines throughout.

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The manual goes on to state that Soviet citizens will be immediately warned of the hazards from radioactive fallout along the path of the movement of the cloud by the "Chemical Attack" signal which will be given over the radio relay network and every other possible means of communication. Inasmuch as "life itself" is endangered by remaining outside of shelters, Soviet citizens are advised they should immediately seek protection in shelters or dug-outs and they are "categorically" forbidden to come out until instructions to do so are received from the civil defense staffs. 6/

Another 1960 publication contained the statement, "At the signal of radioactive contamination, the entire population should take refuge in shelters and covered areas and they must take enough food and water with them to last several days." It also was said that civil defense agencies can quickly determine the direction of the movement of radioactive clouds on the basis of weather data, and that the population can be warned in good time about the danger of contamination or at least the start of radioactive fallout. 7/

The Soviet authorities have disseminated this increased information on fallout through the medium of civil defense instructions, manuals, and training courses. The information therefore is not limited to select groups, but is part of public instruction aimed at preparing the entire population for civil defense. (The USSR has conducted three courses in civil defense for the general population since 1955, and has now started the fourth course, "Ready for Air Defense, Grade II." Practical exercise and testing are stressed in the third and fourth courses.)

A large part of the Soviet population thus is being apprised, or being coerced into learning, that areas endangered by fallout may extend hundreds of kilometers into the countryside from possible urban or industrial targets. At the same time, they are informed that fallout shelters, usable for extended periods, are a necessary part of protection from residual radiation effects.

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Analyst:

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Coord :

1. State, OIR, Intelligence Report 6775, 17 Dec 54, p. 46. OFF USE.
 2. CIA. FDD Translation No. 619, 24 Jan 57, p. 31. OFF USE.
 3. UP Dispatch No. 40, Moscow, 8 Apr 57. U.
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 5. US Joint Publications Research Service. JPRS:3745, 24 Aug 60, p. 2. U.
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 7. US Joint Publications Research Service. JPRS:6769, 16 Feb 61, p. 1. U.
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